

UNITED COLORED DEMOCRACY.

How the Famous Adjunct to New York's Tammany Organization was Conceived and Made Strong—Chief Edward E. Lee a Born Leader of Men.

New York, N. Y., Special.—When Richard Croker installed Edward E. Lee as "the Black Croker" with powers among the colored voters, equal to his own among the white voters of Tammany Hall, and recognized Lee's United Colored Democracy



EDWARD E. LEE.

of all the boroughs of the greater city of New York, as adjunct to Tammany Hall, it struck republicans generally with dismay and dazed thousands of democrats. Many of the politically wise ones of all parties shook their heads with negative nods, as if in doubt as to the wisdom of so radical a move. But Mr. Croker saw things differently and assumed entire responsibility for his action. How well the whole thing has worked will show by a glance at the following figures:

There are in Borough of Manhattan alone, about nine thousand colored voters, ninety-seven per cent of whom voted the republican ticket from the day the Fifteenth Amendment went into effect, up to 1897. In the campaign of that year, Mr. Croker put Edward E. Lee in charge of the colored voters, telling him if he made a good showing that he, Croker, would recognize and treat the colored democrats just as he did the white voters of that party, according to the number of votes cast by them. And Lee went to work, organized the United Colored Democracy, with headquarters at 152 West 53rd street.

Through this organization Robert A. Van Wyck for mayor, received about fifty-two per cent of the nine thousand of colored voters in the Borough of Manhattan. In 1898 Augustus Van Wyck for governor, through this same organization, under Mr. Croker's guidance and Lee's leadership, received sixty-five per cent of these voters. At the election of 1899, seventy-one per cent was cast for the democratic ticket, and in an off year at that. And still the organization is growing, for in every instance Mr. Croker has kept his word with his black leader, Edward E. Lee, and Lee has in all cases fulfilled his promise to Croker. Thus confidence has been fully established on both sides. That the United Colored Democracy has done good work, speaks for itself; for it controlled at the last general election, in spite of McCullough's manipulation and garbling of the returns, three thousand, one hundred and sixty-two bona fide declared colored democratic voters, eligible to vote at the next democratic primary election. That the United Colored Democracy has come to stay, cannot be doubted after a glance at the character and caliber of men just elected officers of the organization.

Edward E. Lee, chief of the United Colored Democracy of all the boroughs of the Greater City of New York, was born in Virginia about forty-two years ago, amid environments that would have been fatal to any man of less indomitable will. His very build is in harmony with the Herculean task set him by Mr. Croker of moulding and controlling a colored democratic organization. Mr. Lee stands about six feet, two inches in his socks, and weighs two hundred and ten pounds. He is of large physique, has a large brain, a big heart, and an iron will. Lee is a born leader of men. His followers regard his word as sacred. In a word there is nothing small about Leader Lee but his purse, and that will never be larger. He is ever seeking something for his constituents, but for himself, nothing; and in this lies the secret of his success as an organizer of his people.

In leaving the republican party and going into the democratic party, Mr. Lee took nearly one thousand colored republicans with him to organize his United Colored Democracy. He has been extremely fortunate in surrounding himself with young, trustworthy and influential men of his race. He is responsible for the presence in the democratic party of such independent and brainy young men as Ralph E. Langston, leader of the colored democrats of the twenty-fifth assembly district, and who has just been elected president of the United Colored Democracy of all the boroughs of the Greater City of New York.

Leader Langston is the second son of the late John Mercer Langston. Mr. Langston senior, was born in Virginia and was educated in Oberlin College, Ohio. He was a man of letters and refinement. He was an able lawyer and



RALPH E. LANGSTON.

was said to be one of the strongest at the bars of Washington, D. C. and Virginia. He was minister to Hayti for eight years under Grant and Hayes respectively. Also represented the 4th Congressional district of Virginia in the House of Representatives for two terms. He was an uncompromising republican, as was also his son Ralph, until Lee took him into the United Colored Democracy. Mr. R. E. Langston has lived in the twenty-fifth assembly district about fifteen years. He was a republican leader and worker up to 1897. His home is in the eighth election district of the twenty-fifth assembly district, where there were registered in the campaign of 1899, ninety-three colored voters, and out of that number sixty-four voted the democratic ticket, owing to Langston's popularity among them. On Monday March 5th, he was elected president of the United Colored Democracy without a dissenting voice and carried the entire ticket through with him. His advent into the democratic party has greatly helped to out the usual republican majority of three thousand to six

hundred and sixty-seven at the fall election in the twenty-fifth, or the Tenderloin district. Langston took into the democratic party with him his bosom friend, Augustus Murray, a life long, rock-ribbed republican. Murray, while living in New York, is a railroad man, running between New York and Boston. Being in New York one day and in Boston the next, he has organized in Boston a democratic club of two hundred strong.

John C. Johnson, chairman of the executive committee of the United Colored Democracy, was born in New York City in 1858, is a bright young man and popular with the young element of the colored race, also an able executive officer, easy and graceful in manner and works in harmony with Chief Lee and President Langston.

William Russell Johnson, leader of the United Colored Democracy for the Borough of King's, was born in New York City forty-two years ago. He is not only leader of the United Colored Democracy for the Borough, but is one



WILLIAM RUSSEL JOHNSON.

of Chief Lee's most respected and trusted lieutenants. Mr. Johnson was one of the founders of the Alfred C. Chapin Club, the first recognized Negro democratic club in the city of Brooklyn, was assistant steward of the Constitutional Club of Brooklyn of which Boss McLaughlin was an honorary member. Mr. Johnson was president of the society of the Sons of New York, a social order, for two terms. This is the largest organization of its kind in the United States. He was also a member of the Board of Vestry, St. Augustine P. E. church. Mr. Johnson is a splendid conversationalist, and is well versed in all current events, social and political. Being a man of brilliant ideas and fluency of speech, makes him an ideal leader among his people. This fact no one better understands or more thoroughly appreciates than Chief Lee.

Mr. Madison S. Jones is a native of the District of Columbia, and one of Mr. Lee's strongest supporters, and holds one of the most important positions in the United Colored Democracy of Greater New York. When Mr. Lee first decided to accept the position of chief of the United Colored Democracy his first official act was the selection of Mr. Jones as his private secretary. Mr. Jones proved to be an indispensable aid to the organization and shortly after he was made private secretary to the Chief, he was unanimously chosen as official stenographer of the organization. He is liked by all who knew him. He is a gentleman, and comes from one of the oldest and most

highly respected families in Washington. His father was one of the first trustees of the colored schools of the District of Columbia and today there is a school in that city that bears his name. Mr. Jones well deserves the honor conferred upon him. He came to this city in the summer of 1893 and immediately began to try to do something with short hand. He was here sometime before he succeeded, but being a young man with push, pluck and ambition he finally landed, and today holds a position in the District Attorney's office of the city and county of New York that no other colored man has ever held in the history of the office.

Thus the United Colored Democracy goes into the campaign of 1900, well armed and equipped to produce results creditable to the organization and beneficial to the colored race.

FACT AND FANCY.

Lieut. Toomey has been dubbed the poet laureate of the Second Baptist Lyceum.

H. Eugene Wilson is preparing to issue a volume of his poetical effusions for distribution among his personal friends.

Senator Mason is swinging merrily around the colored circuit, scattering sunshine and excoviating "canned liberty" as impure food.

The District Commissioner's name is Macfarland. Get onto the spelling and style, fellow craftsmen, before writing any more about him.

While the Mystic Shriners were departing themselves this week in festa array, and the town was giving them the "glad hand"—the Negro looked on.

Booker T. Washington has a strong champion, oratorically and mentally, in the person of Mr. John T. Haskins, foreman of The Colored American composing room.

Lieut. R. E. Gaither is the tallest employee in the Census Bureau and Mr. Samuel H. Bond is the shortest—and it is a remarkable coincidence that both extremes are colored.

There is scarcely a government employee in town who doesn't have a special work outside of his departmental duties—law, medicine, preaching, newspaper, music, organization, private instruction, or political manipulation. It means the expenditure of a lot of energy, but it keeps a fellow's faculties on keen edge, and the stray dollars materially augment the nene-too-liberal salaries received.

There are a lot of "brave" people in Washington and the North who are continually "spouting" about what the colored leaders in the South should do, and what they should not do, etc., These men in the southland have acquired laud, are growing crops, and many are in business. They are, for the most part, at peace with their white neighbors, and have no sympathy with the idle, shiftless class of their own race who hang around bar rooms, commit larcenies and other crimes which make statistics that give plausibility to the criticisms of the Charles Dudley Warners and the editors of such journals as The Atlanta Constitution. The men who live in the South know what is best, and don't need the gratuitous advice of the smart people who never give a penny to help, and who keep their carcasses in safety on this side of the Potomac.

The Delmo Koonce cafe is the finest this side of New York City.